



Rivanna Reservoir 2006



Rivanna Reservoir is owned and operated by the City of Charlottesville as a water supply reservoir for the City and surrounding Albemarle County. This 450-acre reservoir has consistently provided anglers with some of the best small-lake fishing in central Virginia since its impoundment in 1962. One problem that this lake has had historically is poor access. Only one poorly engineered boat ramp exists (on Rt. 659 off of Rt. 631, aka Rio Road), and parking is limited. The public uses several other sites for access, but they are inadequate and not designed for public use. The Department of Game & Inland Fisheries continues to look for opportunities to improve and develop boat access at this lake

The most recent prior fish collection and evaluation was done in 2000. At that time, both largemouth bass and bluegill were caught in high numbers. The bass size distribution was decent, with numerous fish in the 14-19-inch range being collected. Although the bluegill were not large, on average (most were 5 inches or less), a fair number of 7-inch and even a couple of 8-inch fish were found.

Rivanna Reservoir was sampled using electrofishing in late-May, 2005. A total of five species were collected. Only largemouth bass, bluegill, and redear sunfish were abundant in the collections. Catch rates for bass were in the middle of the range observed previously for this lake. However, the size composition appeared to have improved somewhat since 2000; several fish in the 19-22-inch range were captured. Overall, bluegill were even more numerous than in 2000, but the catch rate for quality-size fish was unchanged. Bluegill size seems to have declined a little; no bluegill longer than 7 inches were collected. There was no indication that redear sunfish were collected in 2000. This is surprising because they were fairly abundant in 2005 and 8-9-inch fish were not uncommon. A few black crappie were collected as well, but electrofishing in late-May is not likely to be an effective way to sample them. By that time, the adults have typically moved off-shore into deeper summer-time haunts. Trap-netting during the spring would be a more appropriate method for evaluating their population status. When and if time permits, we may attempt that.

Overall, the fish populations of this lake appeared healthy in 2005. With improved access, Rivanna Reservoir has the potential to provide even more great fishing opportunities to the public. Our Department will continue to try to make access improvement at Rivanna Reservoir a high priority.